

the economic liberties of the common American citizen.

Now, those favoring protectionism tonight have cited several fallacious arguments for rejecting CAFTA and other free trade efforts. Some argue CAFTA will hurt business and jobs. The opposite is true. Even more than previous free trade agreements, U.S. producers have so much to gain under CAFTA. You see, our U.S. markets are already open to Central America. Eighty percent of imports from the six CAFTA countries already enter duty free. Since our markets are already open to goods from these countries, CAFTA will level the playing field like never before for American exports.

CAFTA could expand U.S. farm exports by \$1.5 billion a year as prices of U.S. wheat and other crops are free from tariffs. Manufacturing and information technology could see exports increase by \$1 billion annually when duties are removed. And the list goes on and on. A vote against CAFTA is a vote against new American jobs.

Another argument used by those who oppose trade is concern for the trade deficit, but as I just pointed out, our markets are already 80 percent open to the CAFTA countries. It is their markets that are mostly closed to us. Therefore, CAFTA can only help ease the trade deficit.

Now, other people argue that CAFTA will somehow increase illegal immigration. The opposite is, of course, true. Most illegal aliens do not come to America because they love hot dogs, baseball, and apple pie. They come quite simply because they are poor, and they need to feed their families. Trade with these Central American countries will help make the Central American countries more prosperous. Greater Central American prosperity will lead to fewer desperate workers, which in turn will lead to fewer illegal immigrants than would otherwise come over.

The CAFTA understanding on immigration measures explicitly states that it does not impose on the parties any obligations with respect to foreigners seeking employment or residency. Simply put: A vote against CAFTA is actually a vote for more illegal immigration.

Another argument which just simply does not stand up to scrutiny, Mr. Speaker, is that somehow, some way, somewhere the U.S. loses sovereignty. CAFTA is a voluntary agreement with our neighbors to lower tariffs according to a mutually agreed-upon schedule. If any country violates their commitments, other countries, of course, are free to retaliate as they wish. But no international body can make or change U.S. law. Again, no international body can change or make U.S. law. All we do is agree to a nonbinding dispute resolution that we are free to ignore at our will.

Mr. Speaker, we must pass CAFTA and the free trade it represents. Free trade delivers greater choice of goods

and services to our consumers at lower prices. That means American families can buy better products using less of their paychecks. It is all about competition, and competition has always helped the consumer. We have over 200 years of history to prove it. And it does not matter if that competition comes from Nashville, Nicaragua, El Paso, or El Salvador.

Over the past few years, prices have dropped for a wide array of goods and services that are produced around the world, such as video equipment and toys, yet we pay a whole lot more for products that do not compete with foreign countries; for example, prescription drugs and cable TV. Competition works. Trade works. No one should come to this floor claiming to speak for low-income Americans and oppose CAFTA.

Mr. Speaker, beyond all the obvious economic benefits of free trade, we must recognize that this is fundamentally an issue of personal freedom. Nations do not trade with nations. People trade with people. With the exception of national security considerations, every American citizen should have the right to determine the origin of the goods and services that they want to purchase. Is this not the land of the free? Have not generations fought and sacrificed to secure the blessings of liberty?

Now, maybe we in Congress have the power, but do we have the right, do we have the moral authority to tell a waitress in Topeka, Kansas, she cannot buy a can of beans to help feed her family because it comes from El Salvador? Do we have the right, do we have the moral authority to tell a construction worker in New York that he cannot buy a pretty blue dress for his 3-year-old daughter because it comes from Honduras? Shame on us if we claim we do have that right.

Mr. Speaker, for over 200 years America has benefited from more trade and greater competition. I urge my colleagues to once again reject raw protectionism, reject bitter partisanship, and stand for freedom, stand for prosperity, stand for free trade and vote for the Central American Free Trade Agreement.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Minnesota (Mr. RAMSTAD) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. RAMSTAD addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Michigan (Mr. LEVIN) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. LEVIN addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gen-

tleman from Indiana (Mr. BURTON) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. BURTON of Indiana addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentlewoman from Ohio (Ms. KAPTUR) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Ms. KAPTUR addressed the House. Her remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. EMANUEL) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. EMANUEL addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentlewoman from Tennessee (Mrs. BLACKBURN) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mrs. BLACKBURN addressed the House. Her remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Texas (Mr. BURGESS) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. BURGESS addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Texas (Mr. GENE GREEN) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. GENE GREEN of Texas addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Hawaii (Mr. CASE) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. CASE addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. SAXTON) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. SAXTON addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Texas (Mr. BRADY) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. BRADY of Texas addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Florida (Mr. SHAW) is recognized for 5 minutes.